that over 75% of total T&D losses almost entire commercial loss take place at distribution stage, apart from maximum customer interface. Distribution reform will bring about financial viability of the power sector to enable it to sustain private investment in the sector.

Implementation of short-term schemes *viz.* consumer meters, capacitor installation, replacement/ installation of distribution transforms and reconductoring sanctioned during 2000-01, have helped in improvement of revenue and reduction of outages in certain States. The schemes are under implementation.

Declaration of backward districts in Himachal Pradesh

†724. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the districts in Himachal Pradesh that have been declared backward by Government;

(b) what are the norms for assessing any district to be declared as backward;

(c) when was such an assessment made in Himachal Pradesh in the past; and

(d) by when the decision in respect of reassessing the backwardness of the districts of the State is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL): (a) to (c) A committee (headed by the then Principal Adviser in the Planning Commission) was constituted in 1997 to, *inter-alia*, identify the 100 must backward and poorest districts in the country. The broad parameters adopted by the Committee to analyze the causes of backwardness, included indicators of deprivation (poverty ratio) and social and economic infrastructure. Keeping the above parameters in view, the Committee identified 100 most backward and poorest districts in the country including Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh.

(d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Revision of action plan for watershed schemes

725. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to revise the action plan for the ongoing watershed schemes according to the demand of the area

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

and also to ensure effective implementation of the cluster catchment development project; and

(b) if so, the details of the revised action plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL): (a) and (b) The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) in the Ministry of Rural Development is implementing three Watershed Development Programmes namely the Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) for treating the wastelands and degraded lands in accordance with the Guidelines for Watershed Development. Action Plan for each watershed development project under these Programmes is prepared by the Village Level Watershed Association/Watershed Committee consisting of all the stake holders under the guidance of a technical team of the Project Implementing Agency. The Action Plan is approved at Zilla Panchayat/DRDA level. These plans help in treating the wastelands and degraded lands in the project area. In September 2001, the cost norm for development/treatment was revised upward to Rs. 6000 per hectare for the watershed projects sanctioned under the three Programmes after 1.4.2000. Consequently, the ZPs/ DRDAs were requested to revise the Action Plan of these watershed development projects only. These Action Plans were to be revised at Watershed Committee level and were required to be approved at the ZP/DRDA level for implementation of these projects. For the projects sanctioned before 1.4.2000, the approved Action Plans would continue to be implemented by the Watershed Associations/Committees.

Request of Maharashtra Govt. to treat EGS as a sub-project of SGRY

726. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
DR. KARAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it was decided that with the introduction of the Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana, the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) would not be eligible for Food for Work;

(b) whether Government of Maharashtra has requested the Central Government that the erstwhile Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) should be regarded as a sub-project of the Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana and be made eligible for Food for Work Programme; and